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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 009471

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [EG](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT CLEAR ON USG APPREHENSIONS OF BASHIR AS  
AFRICAN UNION PRESIDENT; SHARES CONCERNS OVER UNRESOLVED  
DARFUR CRISIS.

REF: STATE 226663 (NOTAL)

Classified by ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

1. (C) During a December 22 meeting with poloff, MFA Assistant Minister for African Affairs Mohamed al Higazy shared that he was already aware of USG discomfort at the prospect of Sudanese President Bashir being offered the Presidency of the African Union at the January summit in Khartoum. Higazy said that the Egyptian Embassy in Washington had recently reported U.S. thinking on this topic. Higazy explained that it would be diplomatically difficult for Egypt to tell its southern neighbor "no," should Khartoum make a strong pitch for the AU position. Nevertheless, he said that there was already considerable back-channel discussion among AU members of alternatives to a Sudan presidency.

2. (C) Poloff also suggested Egypt use its influence with Khartoum ahead of the January AU summit and the Arab League March Khartoum summit to be as forthcoming and creative as possible at the Abuja talks to reach final agreements to end the crisis in Darfur. It was not in anyone's interest to sit back and allow rebel group disunity to prevent resolution to the crisis. Higazy said that Egypt understood the dangers of allowing the Darfur crisis to fester, particularly in light of the growing security chaos along the Chad border and growing instability in Njdamera. He expected that these would be topics of discussion during his bilateral consultations in Washington January 11.

RICCIARDONE